(b) if so, the details of broad features of the index-linked bonds;

(c) the quantum of money which the Government propose to borrow through these bonds; and

(d) the time by which these bonds are likely to be floated ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). No decision has been taken in this regard.

(d) Does not arise.

Funds for the Infrastructure Projects

5682. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Work Bank through its, subsidiary the International Development Agency has offered a $ 250 million low interest (0.5%) 30 years loan to fund relief and rehabilitation (R&R) expenditure connected with large infrastructure projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the response of the Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[Translation]

Tasar Silk

5683. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the demand of Indian Tasar silk has increased in the foreign markets;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to expand the areas of production of Tasar silk; and

(d) the amount spent for development of this sector during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The programmes for increasing tasar silk production are primarily formulated and implemented by the concerned State Sericulture Departments. However, in order to supplement the efforts of the States, the Central Silk Board has set up a network of units to extend necessary R&D. Extension Training & Infrastructural support for the development of tasar sector. Besides, CSB is also organising preparation/supply of tasar silkworm seed and demonstration of improved techniques of tasar cocoon cooking, reeling & spinning. Further, in order to support tasar cocoon growers financial support has been provided to marketing organisations to strengthen the existing marketing system.

(d) The expenditure incurred by the CSB for development of tasar silk industry during last 3 years is as under :

	(Rs. in crores)
1993-94	3.34
1994-95	3.40
1995-96	4.05

[English]

Import of Newsprint

5684. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total quantity of newsprint imported during 1994 and 1995 and proposed to be imported during 1996;

(b) whether domestic supply of newsprint is not sufficient to meet the demand;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the estimated gap between demand and supply of newsprint in the country at present; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to meet the demand of newsprint ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The import of newsprint during the last three years has been as under :

Period	Quantity (Lakh MT)
1993-94	3.11
1994-95	2.92
1995-96	3.45

During the current year, upto 30.6.96, a quantity of 0.91 lakh MTs of newsprint has been imported.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The demand of newsprint and its production in the country during the last three years has been as under :

Period	Demand	Production (in lakhs MT)
1993-94	5.80	3.61
1994-95	6.00	4.02
1995-96	6.30	4.10

(d) Government have taken the various steps to increase the indigenous production of newsprint. These include.

(i) A capacity of 6.55 lakhs tonnes by way of Industrial Licences/Letters of intent has been sanctioned.

(ii) Under the new Industrial Policy, newsprint units based on minimum 75% pulp derived from bagasse, agro-residues and other non-conventional raw materials have been exempted from compulsory industrial licensing subject to locational policy.

(iii) Customs duty on import of wood pulp for manufacture of newsprint has been abolished.

(iv) Newsprint is exempted from excise duty.

(v) Such paper mills which are producing paper conforming to BIS standards for newsprint subject to their products being used by newspapers and its quality being found satisfactory, are being considered by Government for inclusion in Schedule I to the Newsprint Control Order, 1962 as mills manufacturing newsprint.